



# *The Insider*

[www.senate.mi.gov/switalski](http://www.senate.mi.gov/switalski)

## **Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10**

**April 16, 2004**

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing, while keeping true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at [senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov) or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment, or you can just walk in. See page 4 for the schedule. In addition, you can keep track of legislation that my fellow legislators and I are working on at [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org).

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### **Budget Process Starting to Heat Up**

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The heat is on!

And I don't mean the weather.

The budget process is now starting to heat up as the Michigan Senate and House passed their versions of several budget bills before the beginning of the two-week Easter recess.

Already things are looking a bit dicey. And it's not even May.

The House passed the Agriculture, Capital Outlay, Family Independence Agency, General Government, History, Arts and Libraries, Judiciary, Labor and Economic Growth, Military Affairs, State Police and Transportation budgets. The Senate passed the Community College, Community Health, Corrections, Education, Environmental Quality, Higher Education, Natural Resources, and K-12 School Aid budgets. Each chamber will now swap the budget bills for further work.

The versions of the budget bills that passed in late March are already over \$580 million more in general fund revenue than the amount the Governor proposed. General fund revenue is discretionary spending that can be used based on the determination of the legislature.

But when it comes to paying for these increases, the Governor's proposed cigarette and liquor tax increases have been stalled in committee. Either revenue needs to be found for these spending increases or corresponding cuts to other budget items to valuable programs needs to be made.

Both sides of the aisle are looking to fund their budget priorities, which is to be expected. There is still a long way to go in the budget process. After each chamber passes their version of the budget bills, the bills are placed in a conference committee where a compromise can be reached.

Two of the most contentious and controversial debates in the Senate were the passage of the K-12 School Aid and Department of Corrections budget.

I offered an amendment in the Corrections budget that would restore some funding for the Academic/Vocational and Substance Abuse Testing and Treatment programs. These programs provide training and counseling to inmates so that when they are paroled, they will have a better chance to become productive members of society. Both amendments failed, however.

Another amendment that was offered would restore funding for Hepatitis C testing for the prison population that had been cut earlier in committee. This amendment spurred passionate debate on the Senate floor before being defeated. I voted in favor of the amendment due to concerns that any paroled inmate that has hepatitis C could spread it to whoever they come into contact with in the general public.

In addition, the K-12 School Aid budget passed. The School Aid budget restored the basic per pupil foundation allowance of \$6,700 that was cut last year. The budget also preserved 20j hold-harmless funding for school districts such as Warren Consolidated. I supported both proposals.

I also offered an amendment that sought to restore about \$10 million in funding for “at-risk” pupils which was taken out in subcommittee. Roseville, Clintondale and Utica Community School districts receive about \$1 million each in “at-risk” funding. Chippewa Valley also gets about \$478,000 in “at-risk” funding. However, my amendment was defeated and could potentially endanger “at-risk” funding for these school districts.

The trump card will occur in May, when a second revenue estimating conference is slated to determine the final revenue figures that are to be used when passing the final budget bills. If revenue is less than was anticipated by the January revenue estimating conference, further cuts or revenue enhancements will be needed on top of what has already been proposed.

Indeed, the budget process is far from over and the flames of budget politics have just begun.

*Stay tuned to future additions of the Insider e-mail for future budget updates.*

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## **Environmental Task Force**

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Memorial Day is just over a month away, and its arrival signals the unofficial start of summer.

Summer brings warmer weather and trips to the beach. For too many Macomb residents, beach closings have become the norm as our lakes and water streams are constantly registering above normal levels of bacteria.

Our drinking water also comes from water streams such as Lake St. Clair, which is known to have high levels of toxins. To address the issue of water quality, the Senate Democratic Party has created an Environmental Task Force with a theme of “Clean Water for our Children”.

I will be hosting one of the three public forums of the task force at Metro Beach, located at 31300 Metropolitan Parkway in Harrison Township on June 3 from 7-9 p.m.

I will be discussing what elected officials such as myself at the state level can do to address water quality in this state as well as legislation that I am currently working on. The forum will also feature an opportunity for the public to interact by asking questions and providing testimony on issues that pertain to our environment.

The task force hearings are open to anyone who wishes to attend. I encourage anyone who is interested in protecting our water sources and providing clean water for our children to come to the forum.

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## **Join the Fight Against Cancer**

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Cancer is an illness that affects everyone in some way. It may be someone you know, such as a loved one, a spouse, a sibling, a friend. Cancer can also be lethal as it is the second leading cause of death in the United States.

Sterling Heights Mayor Richard Notte and I are teaming up for a second consecutive year in the effort to raise money for the American Cancer Society in their battle against cancer.

Last year, Mayor Notte and I raised over \$5,000 at the annual Relay for Life walk-a-thon fundraiser. This year we hope to raise even more but we need your help.

The Relay for Life will take place on May 22 and May 23 at Chippewa Valley High School, located at 18300 19 Mile Road in Clinton Township. The event will begin at 10 a.m. on May 22 and will feature a 24-hour walk-a-thon with at least one member of each relay team staying on the track at all times.

If you would like to help, I will be collecting donations on behalf of the American Cancer Society in support of the "Relay for Life". Checks can be mailed to: Relay for Life, c/o Senator Michael Switalski, 28311 Utica Road, Roseville, MI 48066.

Any help would be greatly appreciated. Together, we can make strides in the search for a cure to cancer.

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## **Mickey's TV Insider Show**

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Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

### **Sterling Heights**

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

### **Utica**

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

### **Clinton Township**

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

### **Roseville**

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.  
(Comcast Channel 18)

\*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various

times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

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## Coffee Hours

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\*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have coffee hours in Roseville. I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. For those that wish to attend the coffee hours in Clinton Township, please note that I will be at the new Clinton-Macomb Public Library, located at the corner of Romeo Plank and Canal Road on April 26.

### **Clinton Township**

**Apr. 26- (NOTE NEW LOCATION)**

Clinton-Macomb Public Library  
40900 Romeo Plank  
7-9 P.M.

**May 24**

Clinton Township Public Library  
35891 Gratiot, north of 15 Mile  
7-9 P.M.

### **Sterling Heights/Utica**

**May 3**

**7-9 P.M.**

Location: Sterling Heights Library  
(Utica and Dodge Park roads)

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## Contact My Office

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### **Lansing Office**

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### **District Office**

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Fax-(586)774-0012